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**Guide to Employability Skills**

Your time at university is designed to help you develop your knowledge and skills, not only academically but as part of a broader experience equipping you with not just skills for learning, but skills for work and skills for life.

Obviously, you will acquire a good working knowledge and expertise within your subject area, but you will also develop more generic graduate skills that are widely valued in the workplace and will contribute greatly to your success in your future career and life as a whole.

Employers increasingly expect these employability skills whether you are entering a profession specific to your degree or a more general graduate entry stream. When you begin to look for work, or even placements and internships, you will find the typical graduate job advertisement asking for a wide range of them.

As you progress through your degree, you will have many opportunities to develop these skills through both your academic study and your outside commitments, whether part-time work, caring, recreation or managing finances and general student life. The key to this is recognising what these skills are and planning ahead to ensure you graduate with the full set of competencies to get you the job you really want. This means taking the right decisions, organising yourself effectively and having the self-commitment and self-belief to succeed.

A good starting point is to think about the course you are studying, and how your assignments, lectures, essays and other academic activities help build these graduate skills.

Gaining Skills Through Academic Study

Your academic activities at university are designed to help you develop key graduate skills alongside acquiring knowledge and expertise in your subject area. For example, all degree subjects contain an element of problem solving and analysis through a wide range of activities.

For some assignments, you may be required to fact-find or decide the best approach for carrying out research for an essay or dissertation. For others, you may need to work out the best way forward for a group project, perform a risk assessment for a practical project or solve an engineering problem. From these activities, you should therefore learn to analyse facts critically, make informed decisions and to find solutions to work around obstacles and achieve your goal.

The table on the next page gives a guide to how you can build these skills through your study activities. You will also find that good IT skills, along with numeracy and literacy, are a prerequisite for most graduate jobs

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| **Planning and organisational**  Time management  Prioritising  Setting goals and achieving them  Planning: breaking things down into tasks  Decision making  Meeting deadlines  Managing your resources: notes, online sources, journals and books, research data, references | **Problem solving and analytical**  Understanding the question  Planning methodically  Researching: gathering, analysing and using information  Making conjectures  Drawing conclusions  Anticipating / troubleshooting problems  Being flexible / able to adjust plans |
| **Written Communication**  Understanding and following written instructions  Clearly communicating facts / ideas  Summarising  Showing awareness of intended audience  Writing academically  Producing reports and documents to specific formats and styles  Attention to detail  Using vocabulary / terminology specific to subject area | **Verbal Communication**  Articulate and able to communicate viewpoint  Good listening skills  Awareness of others values / beliefs  Summarising skills  Questioning skills  Good body language  Awareness of audience  One to one communication skills  Presentation skills |
| **Teamwork**  Excellent verbal communication  Persuading and negotiating- ability to put across own ideas and accept/dispute other peoples  Respect for alternative points of view  Self-awareness and Assertiveness  Ability to accept constructive criticism  Time management | **Leadership**  Excellent interpersonal skills  Motivate and inspire others  Planning and decision making  Coordinate team work  Value team members and promote their development  Initiative |
| **Intellectual / creative ability**  Critically analyse and evaluate information  Develop a line of reasoned argument  Use appropriate academic language  Lateral thinking  Open to new concepts / ideas  Able to keep abreast of subject  Applying knowledge in new ways  Forming new ideas from current practice/knowledge | **Self-awareness / self-reliance**  Self-motivated / confident  Integrity and assertiveness  Networking skills  Aware of strengths and weaknesses  Able to action-plan and self-manage  Open to new opportunities  Able to handle and manage change  Willing to learn |

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